

ALAMEDA COUNTY TASK FORCE ON THE HOMELESS
1221 Oak Street, Oakland, California 94612

AGENDA 2 October 28, 1986

October 28, 1986

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Board Members:

SUBJECT: Report from Alameda County Task Force on the Homeless

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board of Supervisors review the attached report and recommendations submitted by the Alameda County Task Force on the Homeless.
2. That the Board of Supervisors approve, in principle, the attached recommendations.
3. That the Board of Supervisors refer the recommendations to appropriate county staff so that they can work in conjunction with the Task Force, as appropriate, to implement these recommendations immediately.

SUMMARY

In July 1986, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors formed a Countywide Task Force on the Homeless. The Task Force's purpose was to identify the problems associated with Homelessness, select and prioritize solutions, identify funding sources, and advise and make recommendations to the Alameda County government, the cities within Alameda County, and the State and Federal governments. In order that this charge be carried out, two Sub-Committees of the Task force were formed: Action-Plan and Solutions.

DISCUSSION/FINDINGS

The fact that the Homeless crisis in Alameda County is escalating is well documented. Monthly, over 6,000 people are turned away from Alameda County's shelters, a majority of whom are women and their young children. The Countywide Task Force (see attached membership list) was formed to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to solving the problem; an approach involving the participation of the county, cities, public and private sectors.

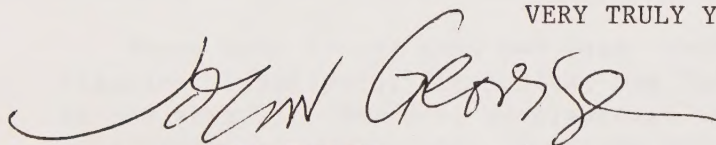
DISCUSSION/FINDINGS (Cont'd.)

The Action-Plan Sub-Committee has been compiling material that clearly documents the problem of Homelessness and the various solutions necessary to solve the problem. The Solutions Sub-Committee has been exploring legislative and policy-oriented responses, including identifying potential funding sources and mechanisms. While the Task Force continues to complete its charge, there is an immediate need to provide assistance to the County's Homeless and to providers of services to the Homeless. Therefore, the Alameda County Task Force has approved the attached six recommendations for submission to the Board of Supervisors, with the hope and encouragement that they will be acted on with the urgency that this crisis requires.

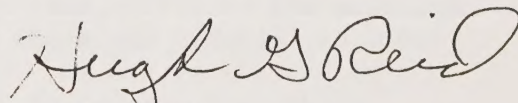
In summary, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Alameda County make a firm moral and financial commitment to ensure that there be no loss of existing shelter beds and other emergency support services.
2. There be an immediate increase in bed and emergency support service capacity.
3. Efforts must be made to develop and provide funding for a Revolving Loan/Grant program to enable homeless individuals to move into permanent housing.
4. A Comprehensive Countywide Plan should be developed.
5. Alameda County must continue to address the issue of coordination and funding for emergency services to the Homeless by assigning a Countywide Homeless Coordinator.
6. The Emergency Services Network (ESN) of Alameda County should be recognized as the official coordinating and planning body for private non-profit providers of emergency services, and matching funds be appropriated to ensure the ESN's operations through June 1987.

VERY TRULY YOURS,



JOHN GEORGE
TASK FORCE CO-CONVENER



HUGH REID
TASK FORCE HOMELESS DELEGATE

Attachment:

cc: Task Force Members
Dave Kears
Jack Weir
County Counsel
County Administrator



ALAMEDA COUNTY
HEALTH CARE SERVICES
AGENCY



AGENCY HEADQUARTERS
499 Fifth Street
Oakland, California 94607
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ALAMEDA COUNTY TASK FORCE ON THE HOMELESS

INTRODUCTION WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

October 21, 1986

INTRODUCTION

The Action-Plan Sub-Committee of the Alameda County Task Force on the Homeless has been compiling data on the Homeless problem in Alameda County for the past several months. A tremendous amount of material has been collected, and it will take time to assess, organize and present the data in a complete and comprehensive manner. However, given the enormity and severity of the problem, there are several critical concerns which the Sub-Committee would like to see addressed and immediately implemented.

Following is a brief overview of the homeless problem and six recommendations for action:

Overview

Alameda County can no longer afford to address the homeless situation in a piecemeal, inadequate manner. Every day we are visibly reminded of a population without places to call "home", instead finding refuge in the doorways of buildings, in cars, abandoned homes, regional parks, on park benches, or huddled together in the bushes of a local church.

There have always been homeless, traditionally categorized as the mentally disabled, transients, alcoholics, bag ladies, and those who "choose" to live on the streets. However, homelessness in the 1980s has new facets and is a more troubling phenomenon. Downtown redevelopment in cities, escalating housing costs, unemployment, and increased reports of domestic violence all contribute to the growing "new homeless" population.

According to a recent Emergency Services Network (ESN) survey done in January 1986, 1300 different women, men, and children sought the 331 shelter beds in Alameda County - a need four times greater than the services available, and an increase of 25% from 1985. According to emergency service providers, and evidenced by the living testament of our city streets, all indicators point to an increase in homelessness and the problems related to being homeless. Some of the findings from ESN's Needs Assessment are:

- * The homeless population is increasingly composed of women and children, families, victims of domestic violence, youth, and individuals with employment histories;
- * Over 60% of shelter residents are families;
- * A majority of shelter residents are single women and their young children;
- * 36% of shelter residents are under the age of 12;
- * Over 10% of those residing in shelters are pregnant women;
- * The elderly (55 and Older) comprise approximately 7% of the shelters' population.

There are many reasons why a person becomes homeless. In Alameda County, the most common reason a person requests shelter is because they lack the money to pay rent. Given the 1.6% vacancy rate for housing, the number of affordable units is severely limited. Many shelter residents come from and leave to another shelter, hoping a longer stay will enable them to pull together the resources they need to make it on their own.

Of the shelter residents who are unemployed, more than 50% have been without a job for more than 6 months, thereby making it difficult for them to provide the financial resources necessary to move into a home and make monthly rent or mortgage payments. Since late 1985 in Oakland alone, 15 plants have closed resulting in the layoff of close to 3,000 workers. Recent studies reveal that losses in the manufacturing sector lead to losses in the service industry. Therefore, even while the unemployment rate continues to drop (from 7.0 in 1984 to 6.6 in 1985), a significant number of jobs are being phased out of our economy. The victims of these plant closures often remain unemployed, and many become homeless. For most of their lives, these citizens have made significant contributions to society. After their financial resources run out, they often do not qualify for, or know where to turn for assistance. These factors are often the "entrance ramps" to the cycle of homelessness. Homelessness is not just lacking a house in which to live, but involves a loss of self-esteem, severe stress and mental anguish, break-up of families, health problems, and a host of other human issues.

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Other factors contributing to the rise in homelessness include the increase in reports of domestic violence (accounting for 22% of requests for shelter) and the "feminization of poverty". Women and children continue to face economic hardship due to high divorce rates, lack of child support (only 25% of fathers pay), and lack of affordable child care which often prevents individuals from entering the work force. Given that female-headed families live on 40% of the income that male-headed families live on, it is not shocking to realize that the majority of Alameda County's shelter residents are women and their young children.

There is a myth that says when a county or city offers services for the homeless, more will be drawn into the area. There is no evidence to suggest that the homeless "migrate" toward available resources. In fact, 80% of the homeless in Alameda County identify Alameda County as their place of residence, and only 4% are from surrounding Bay Area Counties. Within the County, available services tend to draw people from other parts of the County, as in the case where Oakland residents find the only shelter beds open in South County, or vice versa. However, if enough services were available in both North and South County, Alameda County's homeless citizens would choose to remain close to their own communities, and would not travel needlessly to find available services.

The cycle of homelessness is a revolving door. The people most likely to be trapped are single parents, young families, teen mothers, the recently unemployed, Vietnam-era veterans, and mentally disabled men and women. They share many common characteristics - lack of money, unemployment, poor nutrition, emotional and mental disorders, health and dental problems, etc. Once they have entered the cycle, the way out is hard to find.

Although the media has identified the holiday season as the time to focus on the problem, requests for shelter in Alameda County do not vary significantly from season to season. Homelessness is a year-round struggle, and we must no longer turn our backs. There is no longer a question of need; the need is apparent. When a flood forces a family onto the streets, there is no shortage of helping hands and emergency services to help them through the crisis. But, when a family is homeless for reasons other than a natural disaster, they are not afforded the same care and concern as the homeless victims of a fire or flood. Whether the disaster is natural or human-made (plant closures, lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, rent increases), the end result is still the same: All people without homes should be entitled to safe and sanitary emergency shelter.

The following recommendations are made by the Action Plan Sub-Committee of the Homeless Task Force for review, discussion, and approval. Upon approval by the Task Force, we hope that the Board of Supervisors will consider implementing these recommendations immediately.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

It is imperative that a firm moral and financial commitment be made to ensure that there be no loss of existing shelter beds and other emergency support services. This year alone has seen two major providers of service - Mission S.A.F.E. and Second Chance - face complex difficulties which could have led to the loss of essential emergency services. In truth, all emergency service providers within Alameda County are constantly faced with limited and unstable fiscal resources to met the needs of their clients.

RECOMMENDATION #2

There must be an immediate increase in bed and emergency support service capacity. This goal can be accomplished in different ways. Some examples are:

- Phase I - Several existing shelters have indicated a willingness and ability to expand their number of beds. A quick survey conducted by ESN, Inc., indicated 27 more beds could be made immediately available. (Approximate cost: \$250,000) (Based on \$25.00/bed night)
- Phase II - 150 additional beds can be added within a four (4) month period (depending on building availability). (Approximate cost: \$1.4 million) (Based on \$25.00/bed night)
- Vouchers - Given the enormity of the problem and the fact that the current shelter beds are almost always filled to capacity, vouchers must be provided to temporarily house homeless individuals. (Approximate cost: \$146,000) (Based on FEMA IV figures)
- Buildings vacant at night (churches, recreation centers, schools), could be used as temporary shelter sites.
- The County could enlist the help of the local chapters of the American Red Cross and its own Office of Emergency Services to find temporary emergency shelter during this Winter.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Efforts must be made to develop and provide funding for a revolving loan/grant program to enable homeless individuals to move into permanent housing. (Approximate cost: \$345,000) (Based on Emergency Family Needs/Housing Assistance)

RECOMMENDATION #4:

A Comprehensive Countywide Plan should be developed. A process needs to be developed to prepare a comprehensive report, including a prioritization methodology, to address the long range needs of the homeless. Approximately six (6) months, given adequate resources, will be needed to prepare this plan from the time these recommendations are approved.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

Alameda County must continue to address the issue of coordination and funding for emergency services to the homeless. The following action items are strongly recommended:

A countywide Homeless Coordinator should be assigned. This position should be filled by a high level and visible County staff person to ensure a solid commitment to the ongoing work of the Task Force. In addition, adequate staffing should be assigned from within County Departments until the final comprehensive report is completed. The responsibilities of the Coordinator would be:

- Identify and begin coordination with County Departments and staff who serve the homeless.
- Begin identifying within the business, religious and foundation communities those leaders who could contribute organizationally and financially to the plight of the homeless.
- To enlist the cooperation of city governments and other public entities to ensure maximum services to the County's homeless.
- Work with the Emergency Services Network, Inc., and its member agencies on issues of coordination and planning.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

The Alameda County Task Force on the Homeless recommends that the Board of Supervisors recognize the ESN as the official coordinating and planning body for private non-profit providers of emergency services. In addition, the Task Force recommends that the Board appropriate the \$20,000 immediately to match funds already secured from the United Way of the Bay Area and the City of Oakland, so that the ESN will not be forced to cease its operations. The County should also prepare to take the lead in ensuring adequate funding for ESN's ongoing major coordination and planning role. (Approximately cost: \$20,000.00 -- January - June 1987)

ML/AP:md

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10/21/86

Participants List
Alameda County
Task Force on the Homeless

Conveners: SUPERVISOR CHARLES SANTANA
SUPERVISOR JOHN GEORGE

	<u>Organization/Representing</u>
Mr. Edward Barnes	Legal Aid Society of Alameda County
Ms. Ophelia Basgal	Alameda County Hsng. Authority
Assemblyman Tom Bates	State Assembly
Ms. Carol Beaver	City of Alameda
Ms. Jayne Becker	Oakland City Councilmember Dick Spees
Rev. Carl Bennett	Mission Safe
Ms. Fran Biderman	Emergency Services Network (ESN)
Ms. Angela Blackwell/Karen Klein	Public Advocates
Mr. Paul Brekke-Miesner	Supervisor Perata's Office
Reverend Brice	Mission Safe
Ms. Laura Brown	Women's Refuge (ESN)
Mr. Duncan Buchanan	Hayward
Ms. Pat O'Neill Buchanan	Social Services Commission
Ms. Laurel Burley	Central Labor Council AFL-CIO
Ms. Boona Cheema	Berkeley Oakland Support Svcs. (ESN)
Ms. Gay Cobb	Private Industry Council
Ms. Sharon Craig	State Assemblyman Johan Klehs
Ms. Puni Desai	Emergency Housing, City of Oakland
Mr. Dan Diez	City of Pleasanton
Ms. Sylvia Ehrenthal	Community/Economic Development, City of Hayward
Ms. Pat Englehard	Social Services Agency
Mr. Bob Fitch	Dept. of Housing & Comm. Dev.
Mr. Noel Folsom	Social Services Agency
Mr. Alex Giuliani	Alameda County Mayors' Conference
Mr. Neil Goodhue	Oakland Hsng. Coalition, c/o Dick Spees's Office
Mr. Edward Green	A/C Network of Mental Health Clients
Mr. Art Greenberg	ESN
Mr. Ken Gross	County Administrator's Office
Ms. Anita Gums	Oakland City Councilmember Garter Gilmore
Assemblyman Elihu Harris	State Assembly
Ms. Barbara Hemphill	City of Livermore
Ms. Mary Hewitt	Tri-City Volunteers, Inc. (ESN)
Mr. Robert Jacobvitz	Jewish Community Relation Council
Mr. Don Jen	Office of Economic Development & Emp.
Mr. Dave Kears	Health Care Services Agency
Ms. Dana Kueffner	Health Care Services Agency
Ms. Rebecca Kuiken	First Presbyterian Church
Ms. Barbara Lathrop	City of Newark
Mr. Chuck Lawrence	Social Security Administration (ESN)
Ms. Diane Lowart	City of Dublin
Mr. Robert Matthews	Health Care Services Agency
Fr. John Maxwell	Cath. Diocese of Oakland/St. Andrews Church
Mr. Wes McClure	Alameda County Mayors' Conference
Ms. Claudia McCormick	Commission on the Status of Women
Ms. Mary Miller	ACTEB/ACAP
Mr. Chuck Nogle	CopyServe, Castro Valley

Participants List - continued
 Alameda County
 Task Force on the Homeless
 Page 2

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Charles Patterson	<u>Organization/Representing</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Allan Perkal	Oakland Convention Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Arnold Perkins	Vietnam Veterans Outreach Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senator Nicholas C. Petris	Health Care Services Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Hugh Reid	State Senate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Wilson Riles Jr.	Homeless Client
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Eva Lynn Roberts	Oakland City Councilmember
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Claire Rodas	A/C Network of Mental Health Clients
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Weldon Rucker/Steve Paskowitz	Hayward Downtown Association
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Suzanne Shenfil	City of Berkeley
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Luz Silos	City of Fremont
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Dennis Smith/Rob Caughell	Union City
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Jack Shepherd	City of San Leandro
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Joel Simpson	Alameda County Planning Dept.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Steven C. Szalay	Faith Lutheran Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Marcie Lee Thomas	Assistant County Administrator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dr. Marye Thomas	County Administrator's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reverend M. T. Tompson	Health Care Services Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Karen Wallace	Baptist Ministers' Union
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Ann Watkins	Echo Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Jack Weir	City of Emeryville
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. Elaine Zimmerman	Social Services Agency
		Assemblyman Tom Bates

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